WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A filter cartridge comprising a generally cylindrical filter body having a fluid-filtration media, and at least one length-adjustable end cap attached to an end of said filter body.

2. The filter cartridge of claim 1, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes an annular stationary ring member, and a moveable connection member slideably received within said annular stationary ring member so as to be moveable longitudinally relative thereto.

3. The filter cartridge of claim 2, wherein said moveable connection member includes a cylindrical neck portion slideably received within said stationary ring member, and a flange portion at one end of said neck portion.

4. The filter cartridge of claim 2 or 3, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes an annular base member attached to an end of the cylindrical filter body, and wherein said stationary ring member is generally cylindrical and protrudes upwardly from said annular base member.

5. The filter cartridge of claim 4, wherein said stationary ring member is positioned along a radial dimension of said base member so as to provide for an essentially balanced pressure condition on interior and exterior regions thereof.

6. The filter cartridge of claim 4, wherein said stationary ring member is positioned substantially midway along a radial dimension of the annular base member.

7. The filter cartridge of claim 4, wherein said annular base member includes a cross support rod.

8. The filter cartridge of claim 4, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes a series of radially extending buttresses joined to said stationary ring member and said annular base member.

9. The filter cartridge of claim 1, further comprising a bottom end cap attached to another end of said filter body opposite said length-adjustable end cap.

10. The filter cartridge of claim 9, wherein said bottom end cap includes an arcuate central wall which protrudes into an interior space of said cylindrical filter body.

11. The filter cartridge of claim 10, wherein said bottom end cap includes a series of integral radial support ribs.

12. The filter cartridge of claim 1, wherein said filter body includes a non-woven mass of melt-blown polymeric fibers.

13. The filter cartridge of claim 1, wherein said filter body includes a pleated fluid filter medium.

14. The filter cartridge of claim 2 or 3, wherein said stationary ring member includes a seal ring in slideable sealing contact with said neck portion of said moveable connection member.

15. The filter cartridge of claim 14, wherein said neck portion includes a stop member which contacts said seal ring and thereby limit movement of said moveable connection member.

16. The filter cartridge of claim 1, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes a stationary ring member, and a moveable connection member which carries an O-ring seal, and wherein said moveable connection member is slideably received within said stationary ring member such that said O-ring seal is in sliding sealing contact therewith.

17. The filter cartridge of claim 16, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes an annular base member attached to an end of said filter body, and wherein stationary ring member is generally cylindrical and is integrally joined to, and extends upwardly from, said annular base member..

18. The filter cartridge of claim 17, wherein said moveable connection member includes a cylindrical neck portion slideably received within said stationary ring member in sealing contact with said seal ring, and a flange portion transversely positioned at an uppermost end of said neck portion.

19. The filter cartridge of claim 18, wherein said neck portion includes a recess, and an O-ring seal seated within said recess so as to

be in sealing contact with an interior cylindrical surface of said stationary ring member.

20. The filter cartridge of claim 19, wherein said fluid-filtration media includes a non-woven mass of melt-blown polymeric fibers.

21. The filter cartridge of claim 19, wherein the fluid-filtration media includes at least one non-woven or woven pleated sheet of fluid-filtration material.

22. A filter cartridge comprising:

a filter body which defines a generally cylindrical interior space;

a length-adjustable top end cap attached to an upper end of said filter body and defines an opening to allow fluid-communication with said interior space of said filter body;

a bottom end attached to a lower end of said filter body so as to close said interior space thereat; wherein

said length-adjustable top end cap includes:

(i) an annular base member attached to said filter body;

(ii) a generally cylindrical stationary ring member integrally joined at one end to, and extending upwardly from, said annular base member; and

(iii) a moveable member having a generally transverse annular support flange, and a

cylindrical neck member integrally depending from said support flange, wherein

(iv) said neck member is slideably received within said stationary ring member so as to move the support flange towards and away from said filter body and thereby establish respective lesser and greater axial dimensions of said filter cartridge.

23. The filter cartridge of claim 22, wherein said stationary ring member is positioned substantially midway along a radial dimension of the annular base member.

24. The filter cartridge of claim 22, wherein said annular base member includes a cross support rod.

25. The filter cartridge of claim 22, wherein said length-adjustable end cap includes a series of radially extending buttresses joined to said stationary ring member and said annular base member.

26. The filter cartridge of claim 22, wherein said bottom end cap includes an arcuate central wall which protrudes into said interior space of said filter body.

27. The filter cartridge of claim 26, wherein said bottom end cap includes a series of integral radial support ribs.

28. The filter cartridge of claim 22, wherein said filter body includes a non-woven mass of melt-blown polymeric fibers.

29. The filter cartridge of claim 22, wherein said filter body includes a pleated fluid filter medium.

30. A filter housing which comprises a rigid basket member having a generally cylindrical side wall, and a filter cartridge as in claim 1 or 22 positioned in said basket member, wherein said length-adjustable end cap allows said filter cartridge to assume a length dimension substantially the same as said side wall of said basket member.

31. A method of installing within an open ended basket of a filter housing a filter cartridge having a generally cylindrical filter body which includes a fluid-filtration media, and at least one length-adjustable end cap attached to an end of said filter body, wherein said method comprises positioning the filter cartridge within the filter housing; and longitudinally moving the length-adjustable end cap thereof until said non-standard size filter cartridge corresponds substantially to an effective lengthwise dimension of said basket.